



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report

Deeplene School

September 2018



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School's Details

School	Deepdene School			
DfE number	846/6007			
Address	Deepdene School 195 New Church Road Hove East Sussex BN3 4ED			
Telephone number	01273 418984			
Email address	info@deepdeneschool.com			
Headteacher	Ms Elizabeth Brown			
Joint proprietors	Ms Elizabeth Brown and Mrs Nicola Gane			
Age range	0 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	139			
	Boys	60	Girls	79
	EYFS	64	Juniors	75
Inspection dates	26 to 27 September 2018			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Deepdene School is a co-educational independent day school for pupils aged 0 to 11 years. It was founded in 1948 by the original headmistress. The head and head of nursery are the joint proprietors of the school, and they are supported by an advisory board.
- 1.2 The school comprises two sections: Nursery, for pupils aged six months to five years, and prep, for pupils aged 5 to 11 years.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the school has joined the Independent Schools Association. As a consequence, this is the first inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to strive towards the highest possible academic standards for all. It seeks to provide a high-quality and holistic education for every pupil. The school endeavours to provide a creative and inspiring environment which helps pupils to develop a lifelong thirst for learning.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from families living within an 11-mile radius of the school. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above average. It has identified four pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include language and hearing difficulties, two of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for five pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Also, thirteen pupils have been identified by the school as being the most able in its population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS PROVISION

- 2.19 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
- 2.20 All children make good progress in relation to their starting points. Children under two meet the expected level of development with many exceeding that which is typical for their age. They are extremely well-prepared and carefully supported in the transition process. Practitioners know each child well and understand their learning needs, enabling them to provide appropriate support. They plan learning for all children including those with special educational and/or medical needs. The learning provision provided by the setting meets most needs and interests of all children. Occasionally, staff miss some opportunities for children to strengthen their problem-solving skills.
- 2.21 Children are cared for extremely well, and make good progress in their personal and emotional development within a safe environment, where they are all valued as individuals. Strong relationships and quality time with adults enable children to feel safe, secure, and happy. All staff understand their responsibilities, and work together to keep the children safe. Policies are implemented and all checks on staff have been undertaken effectively. The requirements for the safeguarding and welfare of all children are fully met. Leadership and management demonstrate a commitment to delivering the best care for the children and, as they evaluate practice routinely, the setting continues to improve. The learning experiences and carefully chosen resources enhance the outcomes for children and improve their life chances.

EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 2.22 The effectiveness of leadership and management is good.
- 2.23 Leadership has established a clear vision for high quality. The systematic approach to professional development, supervision and training ensures practitioners routinely develop their skills to a high standard. Areas for development are relevant because of the way in which leadership invite practitioners, parents, and children to collaborate in the evaluation process.
- 2.24 Leaders ensure that the needs and interests of all children are provided for well, and enable them to feel involved in their own learning. The well-planned curriculum and learning programme meet all statutory requirements. Children make a good start to their education because practitioners take care to build effective partnerships with parents. Children are prepared very well for the next stage in their learning due to the attention they receive.
- 2.25 Practitioners promote equality and diversity using a range of stories and resources, which enable all children to understand the differences and similarities between themselves and others. Behaviour is excellent because staff consistently reinforce expectations for 'kind hands and kind words'. Staff ensure that children understand how to treat each other well. They promote British values through storytelling and other activities, for example, children learn to share and take turns when talking together as a group. Children understand the need to listen to each other, and staff sensitively correct any unkind words.
- 2.26 Arrangements to safeguard children meet all statutory requirements. All staff undertake safeguarding training, including the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. Staff recruitment checks are carried out and recorded appropriately, and induction procedures are thorough. Comprehensive policies inform staff of procedures for keeping children safe. Handover routines along with rigorous daily risk assessments ensure that all children are well-safeguarded. Practitioners have received the required paediatric first aid training, and all accidents and administration of medicines are diligently recorded.

QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- 2.27 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- 2.28 Appropriately qualified practitioners have clear expectations of what each child can achieve, including the most able and those who have SEND and/or EAL. Staff are aware of the needs of all children, and they provide such supportive encouragement that the children continually grow in confidence. Staff demonstrate a very secure understanding of this age group, and they maintain a sharp focus on the prime areas of learning. They encourage the children as they acquire new skills, such as standing on their toes, and take every opportunity to extend their vocabulary during role play. Resources are carefully considered to ensure the children are regularly inspired by new experiences.
- 2.29 Staff develop a clear understanding of each child well before they start in the setting because parents are fully involved in providing valuable information about their child's development and experiences. Continuous observations enable progress and further needs to be identified and these are recorded in each child's comprehensive learning records. Children's achievements, for example when they take their first steps, are regularly shared with parents.
- 2.30 Staff treat all children as individuals, and plan for their future learning appropriately overall. Practitioners ably interpret assessment information in identifying children with specific needs, and they provide the extra support that enables these individuals to make good progress. Occasionally, planning for next step learning and development is not as challenging for all children.
- 2.31 Caring practitioners encourage children and praise them for their achievements, thus enabling them to understand more about the learning process. Children understand how to develop their skills because adults consistently reinforce learning routines. Staff share information about individual progress with parents at the end of each day, ensuring they feel part of their child's learning. Parents say they are extremely happy and feel that their views are valued. This creates a very positive relationship between home and nursery.
- 2.32 Children learn to share, build relationships and communicate because activities such as 'circle time' encourage them to listen to one another and to appreciate other cultures. Dual-language books and toys raise children's awareness of different ethnicities and abilities and so increase their understanding of others.
- 2.33 Caring practitioners fully engage with the children, supporting their learning, and asking questions. As a result, children acquire the skills necessary to develop, learn effectively, and are ready to make the move to the next Nursery room.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE

- 2.34 The personal development behaviour and welfare of children are good.
- 2.35 Practitioners encourage children's achievements and celebrate their successes, for example when they say new words as they complete a picture. Practitioners affirm children's achievements, enabling them to grow in self-confidence. In this way, staff create a very caring and positive culture where learning is valued. Children make their own decisions about their learning and confidently make their requests known. They engage happily with adults and enjoy greeting and interacting with visitors. As successful learners they confidently access resources and use their own ideas.
- 2.36 Children carefully negotiate space in the room showing their increased independence and skill. They enjoy exploring their environment and investigating objects made from a variety of materials. They are active learners, though there are times when opportunities to strengthen children's problem-solving skills are limited with the result that their learning is not always as strong as possible.
- 2.37 Practitioners have a secure understanding of the importance of the transition process and they prepare all children for their move to the next nursery room by introducing them sensitively to new routines. This care ensures all children are reassured and secure, socially and emotionally.

- 2.38 Staff relate to children in an extremely warm and caring manner, enabling them to confidently express their wishes. Practitioners carefully provide for children's physical needs. Children's emotional security is evident through their positive approach to learning. Comprehensive records of attendance are kept each day, and parents are contacted if a child is absent.
- 2.39 Staff praise children for managing their feelings and personal behaviour, for example in commending good sharing. Children understand the rules of the room, play happily side-by-side, and take turns. They show clear empathy for others, such as by rocking a doll when concerned that 'she is tired'.
- 2.40 Children understand about keeping themselves safe and they are praised when they walk sensibly indoors. Staff remind children about playing carefully, and children demonstrate a clear understanding of being safe by closing the gate behind them. Practitioners carefully cater for children's dietary needs and promote a healthy lifestyle by the provision of freshly prepared snacks and lunches. Children play outside regularly to enjoy the fresh air.
- 2.41 Children know that they should consider the feelings of others. They learn that some families are different, and they care for others by raising money for the wider community. A policeman and a nurse visit the nursery to explain about their roles with the children. This gives opportunities for children to begin to appreciate how people from different backgrounds contribute to society. Christmas, Diwali and other festivals are celebrated, encouraging all children to respect each other.

OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

- 2.42 Outcomes for children are good.
- 2.43 All children make good progress from their differing starting points. All meet their expected level of development, with a few exceeding that which is typical for their age. They are well prepared for transition to the next class.
- 2.44 Children show increasing independence, such as when choosing activities and when using cutlery on their own. Accessible resources enable them to express their own ideas and make their own choices. They show awareness of self when smiling at themselves in a mirror and playing peek-a-boo. During action rhymes children show their enjoyment of learning and use their imagination when playing in the shop or painting with water outside. They concentrate well with increased attention when singing during registration.
- 2.45 Children contribute to lively discussions about the characters in a book; listen and respond extremely enthusiastically to ideas expressed by others in conversation. Younger children make their needs and ideas known by gesturing or attempting simple words whilst older children begin to put two or three words together. They follow simple instructions, and when asked to find animals in a toy farm they show that their understanding of language is increasing.
- 2.46 Children's motor skills improve as they use paint brushes to make marks, and press buttons to operate toys. They concentrate as they pour beads from one container to another. As they use the slide, ride-on toys and walkers, and as they climb, they show increased control. They develop an awareness of number names through songs, and older children begin to recognise colours. They show an interest in technology as they independently operate a doorbell, use pop-up toys and talk on pretend mobile phones.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

- 2.47 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

The school is advised to make the following improvements to its provision for children in the early years.

- Provide opportunities for children to strengthen their problem-solving skills.
- Ensure that staff clearly identify next steps in children's development, to challenge them and extend their learning.

3. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Steven Popper	Reporting inspector
Mrs Angela Russell	Co-ordinating inspector for early years
Mrs Carrie Askew	Team inspector (head of administration and compliance, IAPS school)
Miss Jane Sheppard	Team inspector for early years (head of Lower School and Nursery, IAPS school)